



**Andrew M. Cuomo** - *Governor*

# **Governor Cuomo Signs Bill to Recognize High School Graduates Who Demonstrate Proficiency in Multiple Languages**

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Albany, NY (July 31, 2012)

Governor Cuomo today signed into law a bill to recognize New York State high school graduates who demonstrate academic excellence in attaining proficiency in one or more languages other than English with a state seal of biliteracy. The seal will be attached to diplomas and transcripts of graduates who excel in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in multiple languages.

“New York state should recognize the outstanding achievements of our students who have dedicated themselves to learning different languages,” Governor Cuomo said. “Acknowledging those students who have pushed themselves to do their very best and learn another language will provide them with an advantage when dealing with future employers and academic institutions. New York is a richly diverse state and these students are doing their part to ensure that we remain an active member of the global community. I thank Senator Robach and Assemblywoman Arroyo for their hard work on this legislation.”

The purpose of the seal is to increase the prospect of a student’s future employment and educational success. The Commissioner of Education will award seals according to regulations developed by the Board of Regents. The bill will take effect September 1.

Senator Robach, sponsor of the bill, said, “Giving the proper credentials for those students who are proficient in English and a second language will be instantly recognizable as an achievement of language proficiency for both colleges and employers. Being proficient in English and a second language is a plus and we should give credit to those students for this achievement. In today’s world, proficiency in both

English and a second language allows our students to be better communicators both in institutions of higher learning and places of employment.”

Assemblywoman Carmen E. Arroyo, sponsor of the bill, said, “New York State takes pride in its tradition of ethnic, racial and linguistic diversity. The State Seal of Biliteracy recognizes the value and importance of bilingualism and will encourage the teaching and learning of languages other than English by all students in our elementary and high schools. In the spirit of bilingualism, I want to give thanks, gracias, to Speaker Sheldon Silver, and Senate Majority Dean G. Skelos for their support. A special thank you to Senator Joseph Robach for his leadership and support in the New York State Senate and all my colleagues in the New York State Assembly and Senate. And lastly un million de gracias, to our very special Governor Andrew Cuomo for signing this important bill into law.”

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